The New Relationship Review

BRITISH COLUMBIA
The Best Place on Earth

Special Edition from B.C.'s Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation - Treaties 2007

SIX FIRST NATIONS ACHIEVE HISTORIC TREATY SUCCESS

Honourable Michael de Jong, Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation

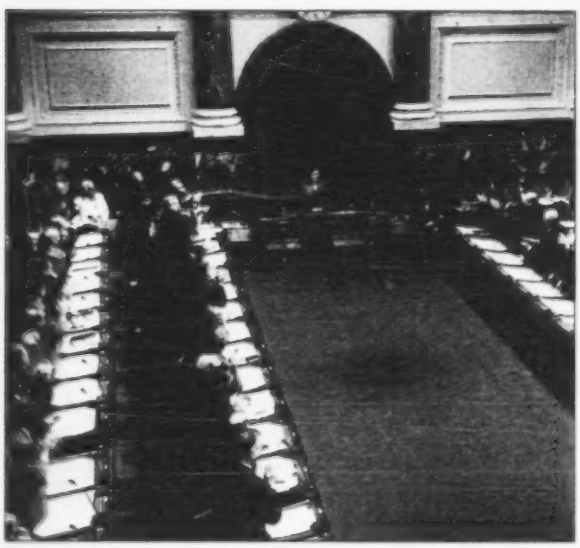
The year 2007 marked the opening of a new chapter in the history of British Columbia, with the introduction of treaty settlement legislation in the Legislative Assembly, first for the Tsawwassen First Nation in October, then for the five Maa-nulth First Nations in November.

The Tsawwassen Final Agreement legislation recognizes B.C.'s first, urban modern-day treaty. The Maa-nulth First Nations legislation represents Vancouver Island's first modern-day treaty and the first Final Agreement negotiated for multiple First Nations under the British Columbia Treaty Commission process.

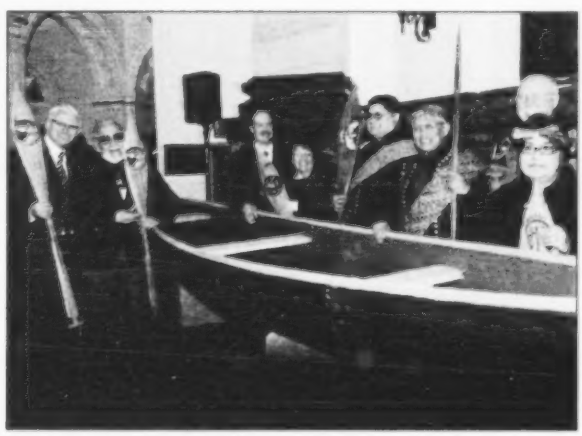
For members of these six First Nations of British Columbia, the road to the Legislative Assembly proved long and arduous. The Tsawwassen First Nation and Maa-nulth First Nations negotiated for many years before seeing their respective Final Agreements introduced as legislation. A dramatic moment in both these historic processes came when the chiefs addressed the Legislative Assembly from the Bar of the House. They all spoke eloquently and identified their Final Agreements with hopes for a brighter future.

On November 22, 2007, the Tsawwassen First Nation Final Agreement Act received Royal Assent in the B.C. Legislature. Royal Assent for the Maa-nulth First Nations Final Agreement Act was granted a few days later on November 29. Settlement legislation must be approved by the Parliament of Canada.

I am excited by the prospect of more First Nations making solid headway in their treaty negotiations and I look forward to future success.



Tsawwassen First Nation Chief Kim Baird addresses the Legislative Assembly of B.C. (October 15, 2007).



Celebrating the introduction of the Maa-nulth First Nations Final Agreement Act (November 21, 2007). From left: Premier Gordon Campbell, Chief Bert Mack, Toquaht Nation, Hon. Michael de Jong, Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, Chief Councillor Vi Mundy, Ucluelet First Nation, Chief Councillor Charlie Coates, Uchucklesaht Tribe, Chief Councillor Robert Dennis, Huu-ay-aht First Nations, Senator Gerry St. Germain, representing the Government of Canada, Chief Councillor Tess Smith, Ka'yu'k't'h'/Che:k'tles7et'h' First Nations.

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Tsawwassen First Nation ceremonial procession arriving at the B.C. Legislature.

Tsawwassen First Nation Makes History in the Legislative Assembly

Canada's first urban treaty took a big step closer to reality when Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation Minister Michael de Jong introduced Tsawwassen First Nation Treaty Settlement Legislation in the Legislative Assembly on Monday, October 15, 2007, at the opening of the third session of the 38th Parliament in Victoria.

Members of the Legislative Assembly gave unanimous consent to invite Chief Kim Baird to speak from the Bar of the House - a rarely bestowed honour.

"For the Tsawwassen people, this is a time of great hope and optimism," Chief Baird said, with about 150 Tsawwassen community members, including her husband Steve and her two daughters, Amy and Sophia, looking on. "This treaty achieves a new relationship between Tsawwassen First Nation, British Columbia, and Canada. It achieves reconciliation, and I mean true reconciliation."

"This is a significant day for the Tsawwassen First Nation and the Province," said Minister de Jong. "Since 1993, Tsawwassen First Nation has been steadfast in their determination to achieve a modern-day treaty. The legislation signifies recognition of their Aboriginal rights and title, while giving the Tsawwassen people the tools to govern their own affairs and work toward a self-reliant, independent future."

On November 22, 2007, the Tsawwassen First Nation Treaty Settlement Legislation received Royal Assent. On December 6, 2007, the Tsawwassen First Nation Final Agreement was signed at a ceremony in Ottawa, introduced in the House of Commons, and given First Reading. After approval by federal legislators, the Final Agreement will take effect on a date agreed to by the parties. Settlement legislation must be approved by the Parliament of Canada.

Singers from Tsawwassen First [illegible]ation performed during a welcoming ceremony. Back row from left: Minister Michael de Jong, Chief Kim Baird, Premier Gordon Campbell, Regional Chief Shawn Atleo of the BC Assembly of First Nations and the First Nations Leadership Council, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Chuck Strahl, Chief Judith Sayers of the First Nations Summit and First Nations Leadership Council.

Treaty Key to Future for Maa-nulth First Nations

Premier Gordon Campbell welcomed chiefs, Ha'wiih (hereditary chiefs) and community members from the five Maa-nulth First Nations to witness the introduction of treaty settlement legislation for Vancouver Island's first modern-day treaty in the Legislative Assembly on Wednesday, November 21, 2007.

"This treaty legislation moves the five communities of the Maa-nulth First Nations a major step forward on their way to self-reliance, prosperity, and reconciliation," said Premier Campbell. "The treaty will support opportunities for economic development and help revitalize a growing and dynamic culture. It provides a firm foundation for the full expression of the Maa-nulth peoples' talents and fulfilment of their aspirations."

After introduction of the Final Agreement legislation, leaders from each of the five Maa-nulth First Nations spoke at the Bar of the House as follows: Uchuckiesaht Tribe Chief Councillor Charlie Cootes, Ucluelet First Nation Chief Councillor Vi Mundy, Ka:'yu:'k't'h'/Che:k'tles7et'h' First Nations Chief Councillor Tess Smith, Huu-ay-aht First Nations Chief Councillor Robert Dennis, Toquaht Nation Hereditary Chief Bert Mack.

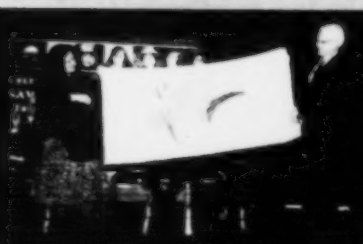
Premier Gordon Campbell greets Maa-nulth First Nations leaders in the Legislative Assembly, Nov. 21, 2007. From left: Chief Councillor Charlie Cootes, Uchuckiesaht Tribe, Chief Councillor Robert Dennis, Huu-ay-aht First Nations, Tyee Ha'wiith Tlisihin Spencer Peters (behind), Chief Bert Mack, Toquaht Nation, Chief Councillor Tess Smith, Ka:'yu:'k't'h'/Che:k'tles7et'h' First Nations, Chief Councillor Vi Mundy, Ucluelet First Nation

The Maa-nulth First Nations are all located on the west coast of Vancouver Island. Their combined population is approximately 2,000 people, with many members living near Bamfield, Port Alberni, Ucluelet and in Kyuquot Sound.

On Thursday, November 29, the Maa-nulth First Nations Treaty Settlement Legislation received Royal Assent in the B.C. Legislature. The Parliament of Canada must now approve settlement legislation.

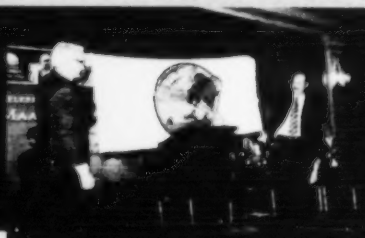
Maa-nulth First Nations ceremonial procession approaches the B.C. Legislature.

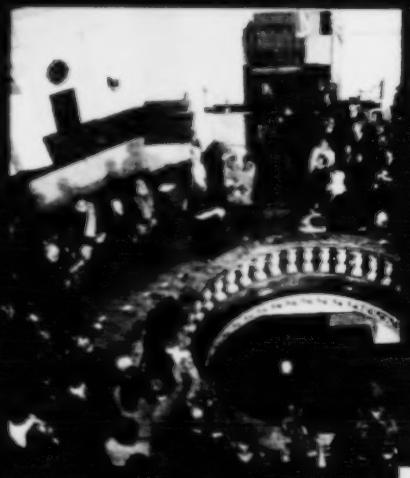
TREATIES HELP RECONCILE THE PAST AND BUILD THE FUTURE



"Premier Campbell made a speech about hope, and hope is what our people are looking for. Hope is so important. Hope you can work with and accomplish, once you get the meaning of hope."

Hereditary Chief Bert Mack
Toquaht Nation





"In my view one of the important things this treaty achieves is a new relationship between Tsawwassen, British Columbia, and Canada. It achieves reconciliation, and I mean true reconciliation. To me, true reconciliation signifies real action and tangible change. True reconciliation is the product of this treaty."

Chief Kim Baird
Tsawwassen First Nation

"We entered this modern-day treaty with a goal in mind – to make life better for our people. We wanted to see more of our children educated. We wanted to see more of our people earning a meaningful income within their homeland. Today we hope those things can become a reality."

Chief Councillor Robert Dennis
Huu-ay-aht First Nations

"I must begin by saying we Ka:'yu:'k't'h'/Che:k'tles7et'h' are not without feelings. We are sensitive people. We love the sea and the land that has always supported us and provided us with a rich lifestyle. The profits of all resource extraction in our traditional territories must benefit our communities."

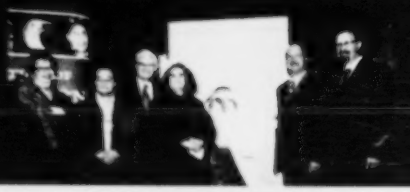
Chief Councillor Tess Smith
Ka:'yu:'k't'h'/Che:k'tles7et'h' First Nations

"The Maa-nulth treaty is an expression of our vision of the future. It is a vision that permits us to see a future filled with opportunities. It is a vision that permits us to move forward and leave the pain of the past behind."

Chief Councillor Charlie Cootes
Uchucklesaht Tribe

"With the Maa-nulth Final Agreement, we affirm old traditions and make new beginnings. In conjunction with other pioneering treaty nations, we are rewriting the history of treaty negotiations in British Columbia and in Canada. There is renewed hope for the future as we embrace the principles that unite and lead us onward."

Chief Councillor Vi Mundy
Ucluelet First Nation



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